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Monday, 16 Apr 2012

**News****Feature Focus**[Celebrate](#)[Conference News](#)[Local Church News](#)[Lifting Up...](#)[NEWS Archives](#)[Resources](#)**SECUCC eNewsletter****Sign up for SECUCC****Email Newsletter** **Southeast Conference FAQ's**[Who is the SEC?](#)[Who is the UCC?](#)[How Do I Find a UCC Church?](#)[What Ministries are Available?](#)[Is Training Available?](#)YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) ► [FEATURE FOCUS](#)**Feature Focus - April 2012****Thailand Immersion 2012**

The Global Theological Education (GTE) Program emerged out of the Theology Among the People (TAP) program of the Southeast

Conference, UCC, in the efforts to broaden our theological horizon within the pluralistic religious and cultural environment face by the church today. Since our first trip to Thailand in 2008, we have had the opportunity to bring 45 people on this life-changing immersion experience in a culture that is in so many ways different from ours in North America. Made possible by the generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation and in association with our partners—the Lancaster Theological Seminary and the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Peace (IRCP) of Payap University in Thailand—we successfully accomplished our trip in January of 2012. The 2012 trip participants comprised of six Lancaster seminarians, six members of the Southeast Conference, three facilitators—Rev. Dr. Tim Downs, Rev. Kathy Clark who also served as the adjunct professor for Lancaster Seminary, and Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim. Journeying together had begun with a Pre-trip Retreat in Lancaster on September 23-25, 2011, and ended with a Post-trip Retreat in Atlanta on March 9-11, 2012, with the two and a half weeks of immersion in Thailand, or the Land of Smile, in January. We visited three cities starting with Chiang Mai, the home of our host Institute, then Mae Sot, a small city near the Burmese-Thai border with a high concentration of Burmese refugees, and then finishing our trip in one of the largest cities in the world, Bangkok.

The intensity of the immersion trip has much to do with the broad spectrum of study topics we were introduced to. Under the topic of interfaith dialogue, we engaged in studies of Buddhism, Thai Islam, and Christianity in Thailand that included a conversation with a Catholic priest at the beautiful Seven Fountains Spirituality Center. In studying conflict

**UCC News****UCC Newsroom**

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

**UCC's Mission:1 receives DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Award**

Mission:1 awarded "Best of Class" in the Public Relations, Advertising Campaign category during the Religion Communicators Council annual conference in Philadelphia.



Center. In studying conflict transformation and peace-building, we learned about the violent conflict between the Buddhists and Muslims in Southern Thailand and the seemingly endless suffering and isolation of the Burmese refugees



living in a camp in a remote mountainous area. Learning about the important social ministries (e.g. HIV/AIDS work) carried out of the engaged Buddhists and the delightful aspects—at times subtle and at times flamboyant—of Thai culture and cuisine has been much like the icing on a delicious cake. In light of the testimonies of the participants who come from all walks of life pursuing both ordained and lay ministry, the total experience has been quite transformative to say the least.



Those of us who have never flown on an airplane now are bona fide world travelers; those of us who work for justice and peace have stretched our imagination as to what may be possible in the face of most unthinkable human predicament; those of us who find ourselves in the turmoil of

pluralism and diversity now have a better grasp of what it means to be a Christian and what it takes to maintain that call and identity. Many of us are still processing what we have seen, heard, tasted, smelled, and touched; though the memories of our time together may fade away over time, the experiences we have shared that struck our deepest cords within will continue to manifest in the ways we live throughout our lifetime. Thanks Be to God.

**Feature Focus - February 2012**



# 46 Years Young



**2016 will mark the fiftieth year since the organization of the Southeast Conference of the UCC.**

In preparation for this noteworthy anniversary the Board of Directors of the conference has supported Michael Stroud as he researches the history of the Conference in preparing to write a book about these fifty years. We will feature some of the remarkable stories that are scattered across our history as a part of the conference e-

newsletter. Today, we offer you the first of these stories. We are deeply grateful to

newsletter. Today, we offer you the first of these stories. We are deeply grateful to Michael Stroud for his commitment to this project and we hope that you will both enjoy and be inspired by it!

[Alabama](#) | [Georgia](#) | [Mississippi](#) | [South Carolina](#) | [Tennessee](#) | [NW Florida](#)

The Last Conference

The Southeast Conference was the last of the conferences of the United Church of Christ to be organized following the formation of the denomination in 1957. An initial attempt to organize the Southeast Conference failed on a first vote in 1964 by the Southeast Convention, but delegates approved the matter to be reviewed again the following year. The Convention of the South approved the joining relationship on its first vote. On April 24, 1965. The new Southeast Conference began operations on New Year's Day 1966.

[Link here to read the complete article](#) and others from the history of the SECUCC.



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EVENTS CALENDAR

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|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S          | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
| 1          | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8          | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15         | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22         | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29         | 30 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |

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